**EDLD 5364 Teaching With Technology Course Embedded Reflection**

**During this course, we worked as members of a five person study group working collaboratively to solve a campus scenario. Our group consisted of Amy Zbylut, Gregory Gedeon, Joyce Howard, Regina Jackson, and myself. Our Group Project Task was to model how technology can positively impact student achievement for diverse learners. As a school-based expert, we were given the opportunity to model how technology could positively impact student achievement for diverse learners. Our learning team was given the task of being a school based expert directed by the principal to work with a classroom teacher to create learning experiences that could not only meet the needs of a very diverse classroom community, but also address 21st Century learning trends. Some of the students in the classroom had very unique needs. With a classroom of 30 students, 10 of these students were identified as gifted and talented along with two students that had extreme disabilities of blindness and a hearing-impaired disability. Eighteen students had varied needs ranging from the lowest to high levels of achievement. The teacher in this very diverse classroom had minimal understanding of how to teach with technology to benefit student learning. Our team met during a skype conference to determine what our group goal would be. After group reflection, it was determined that we had the most group experience in the area of 8th grade science and we would address the 8th grade TEKS objectives relating to natural events impacting Earth systems, the rock cycle process and the earth's physical changes due to erosion and weathering, and plate tectonics. We easily divided our project into separate tasks that we were each responsible for. Each one of our group members readily took on their individual responsibilities and began to complete their tasks dealing with their particular content area. Our Google site offered easy accessibility to our project and the Action Planning area provided an area where we could type our plans to collaborate with each other. We checked all aspects of the 8th grade science TEKS and technology TEKS to make sure that we met all state standards in these necessary areas. Each group member prepared their own UDL lesson and then posted learning activities, technology products, and eBooks that related to their particular lessons, goals, and objectives. We each worked carefully to include 21st century tools and embedded these in our UDLs. A couple of our group members chose to use Glogster to illustrate their UDLs. We also took time to make sure that we used strategies that would work specifically with the students that had special learning needs. Each group member began diligently preparing their information, making their posts, and searching for creative methods to integrate technology into the lessons to provide for best methods to utilize technology to benefit student learning in this very diverse classroom. We were also aware (acting as the tech leader) as we progressed with planning for the classroom scenario, that we would need to meet the professional development needs of this teacher that had minimal understanding of how to teach with technology. Our group members included professional development training to each UDL lesson to assure that the teacher would have easy access to the tools and information needed to adequately address his/her needs for technology instructions and training. Each of our UDLs included assessments, re-teach opportunities, and enrichment lessons that would allow for feedback and assured learner understanding of the content and subject area. We filled our UDLs with technology rich activities to provide for learner centered learning environments. The students would easily be able to share their prior knowledge, review concepts, and acquire new knowledge to help them gain a better understanding of the essential learning. After each group member completed posting their UDLs / individual glogs and provided associated lesson introduction, learning activities, hands on activities, 21st century technology tools, guided practice explanation, independent practice explanation, formative/ongoing assessment, and summative/end of lesson assessment, our project was posted to the unit glog. We also provided materials and possible teacher professional development opportunities in our unit plan. Our team chose to solve the scenario by creating a team glogster that would assist an 8th Grade Science teacher. Our solution and learning activities would allow the teacher to integrate technology to meet his/her Unit Objectives: The student knows that natural events can impact Earth systems (TEK 8.9). The Team Solution Glogster: Natural Events Impacting Earth Systems was developed. Each group member attached learning activities and technology products and links to our team Google site. These links contained additional resources and files that were included and embedded with each group members Unit and individual UDL lessons. Each group member also created an ebook that would assist the teacher in the group scenario. All of these group contributions and downloads were posted to our group Google site.**

**My individual UDL focused on the Introductory Rock Cycle Lesson introducing the Rock Cycle and background information. Each of our team members created individual UDL lessons as discussed in our Skype conference. Based on the scenario and teacher’s limited technology experience, this allowed the teacher to become familiar with and have adequate time to explore the unit and embedded 21st Century tools. We decided to use technology to teach technology. We chose several key technologies that incorporate the collaboration aspect for 21st century learning to place in our learning activities section of our Google site. A few skills that we needed to address were integrating Web 2.0 tools such as Wikispaces and Google docs, UDL Lesson Plans, UDL Book Builder, Glogster development. The UDL lesson plan builder was very user friendly and could be useful for any teacher to utilize for lesson plan development. “UDL does more than insist on flexibility; it provides teachers with the information and resources they need to achieve it” (Rose, D., & Meyer, A., 2002, Chapter 4). Our team project allowed us the flexibility to be creative thinkers while creating a UDL unit that would simplify a classroom teacher’s integration of technology. We were able to provide the teacher with the resources that he/she needed to achieve an engaging learning environment through technology integration.**

**Our group used another Web 2.0 tool, the UDL Book Builder to design e-books. Each of our group members created an e-book to accompany their portion of the unit. I created a book called Rock n Roll – The Story of the Rock Cycle. The book was created with sound and could be utilized with the blind students. The book builder site did allow for the content of a book creation to satisfy a specific content area. At times, the site was not as user friendly as the user might need it to be. The books were colorful and could allow images to be placed in the books as necessary.**

**Our Team Google site allowed for our team to have easy access and to readily be able to add learning activities and technology tools as needed. Our team project allowed us the flexibility to be creative thinkers while creating a UDL unit that would simplify a classroom teacher’s integration of technology. We were able to provide the teacher with the resources that he/she needed to achieve an engaging learning environment through technology integration. By creating our team glog, we gave the teacher flexibility in using a variety of resources that were all accessible from one Glogster poster. Our team’s collaborative experiences are an epitome of Pitler’s statement, "web-enabled collaborative learning has evolved dramatically from its initial use as a simple way for students to look up information together on Web sites" (Pitler, 2007, p.144). The activities and collaboration throughout this project has allowed us to evolve as technology leaders. Throughout this collaborative team project we have used new technologies that gave us the “opportunity to respond to the multifaceted individual differences in our student population by providing more varied media, tools, and methods” (Rose, D., & Meyer, A., 2002, Chapter 1).**

**References:**

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